

**3. Amendments to the claims.**

- 1 1. *(currently amended)* A surgical round knife suitable for ~~connecting being~~  
2 connected to a suction source, comprising:
- 3 a) a shaft being hollow, provided with a longitudinal canal therethrough,  
4 and having a blade end;
- 5 b) a ~~round~~ blade being round, having a diameter, and mounted at said  
6 blade end of said shaft; and
- 7 c) a suction interface positioned remotely from said blade end and  
8 operatively connected for withdrawing blood from said longitudinal  
9 canal in said shaft and out said suction interface;
- 10 ~~wherein said round blade is disposed on one end of said shaft;~~  
11 ~~wherein said suction interface is disposed on the other end of said shaft; and~~  
12 wherein said suction interface is for ~~fluidly communicating with the suction~~  
13 ~~source so as to provide a suction at said round blade and thereby free~~ freeing  
14 up a hand of a surgeon from having to hold a separate suction device ~~and thereby~~  
15 ~~allow the hand of the surgeon to hold an additional instrument;~~  
16 wherein said blade end of said shaft extends into said round blade  
17 approximately one third to one half said diameter of said round blade.
- 1 2. *(currently amended)* The knife as defined in claim 1, wherein said shaft is slender;  
2 ~~wherein said shaft is~~ and elongated; ~~and~~  
3 ~~wherein said shaft is hollow.~~

1     3.     *(currently amended)* The knife as defined in claim 1, wherein said shaft has a  
2           proximal end;  
3           wherein said shaft has a distal end;  
4           wherein said suction interface is disposed ~~on~~ in a vicinity of said proximal end of  
5           said shaft; and  
6           wherein said ~~round~~ blade is disposed ~~on~~ in a vicinity of said distal end of said  
7           shaft.

1     4.     *(currently amended)* The knife as defined in claim 1, wherein said suction interface  
2           is for being ~~sealing~~ sealingly engaged in a plastic suction tube that fluidly  
3           communicates with the suction source so as to allow the suction to extend through  
4           said shaft.

1     5.     *(currently amended)* The knife as defined in claim 1; further comprising a plastic  
2           suction tube; and  
3           wherein said suction interface is ~~sealing~~ sealingly engaged in said plastic suction  
4           tube that is for fluidly communicating with the suction source so as to allow the  
5           suction to extend through said shaft.

1     6.     *(currently amended)* The knife as defined in claim 1, wherein said shaft has a  
2           proximal end;  
3           wherein said suction interface comprises a bulbous ferrule;  
4           wherein said bulbous ferrule of said suction interface is disposed around said  
5           proximal end of said shaft; and

6            wherein said bulbous ferrule of said suction interface is for being ~~sealing~~ sealingly  
7            engaged in a plastic suction tube that fluidly communicates with the suction source  
8            so as to allow the suction to extend through said shaft.

1        7.        (*original*) The knife as defined in claim 6, wherein said bulbous ferrule of said  
2            suction interface is separate from said proximal end of said shaft; and  
3            wherein said bulbous ferrule and said proximal end of said shaft form an integral  
4            structure.

1        8.        (*original*) The knife as defined in claim 6, wherein said bulbous ferrule of said  
2            suction interface is one-piece with said proximal end of said shaft; and  
3            wherein said bulbous ferrule and said proximal end of said shaft form an integral  
4            structure.

1        9.        (*currently amended*) The knife as defined in claim 1, ~~wherein said shaft has a~~  
2            ~~distal end; and~~  
3            wherein said ~~distal~~ blade end of said shaft extends into said ~~round~~ blade so as to  
4            allow the suction to extend through said shaft to said ~~round~~ blade.

10.        (*canceled*)

1        11.        (*new*) A surgical knife for being removably connectable to a suction source, said  
2            knife comprising:  
3            a)        a slender elongated shaft provided with a longitudinal canal therethrough,  
4            said shaft having a proximal end and a distal end, said shaft defining an

5                   effluent opening remote from said distal end of said shaft for exit of fluid  
6                   via said canal in said shaft to the suction source, said shaft further defining  
7                   an influent opening for receiving blood to said canal in said shaft;  
8           b)       an annular blade mounted at said distal end of said shaft, said influent  
9                   opening positioned at said distal end of said shaft, said distal end of said  
10                  shaft extending into said annular blade approximately one third to one half  
11                  said blade;  
12                  whereby the blood is removed from said blade via said influent opening of said  
13                  shaft and said canal in said shaft to maintain visualization of a cutting portion of  
14                  said blade.

1    12.    (new) A surgical annular knife for being removably connectable to a suction source,  
2           said knife being suitable typically for enabling an ear surgeon to make an incision  
3           in an ear canal so as to dissect and lift ear canal skin off a bony canal wall down to  
4           a tympanic membrane for allowing access to an inner ear space while evacuating  
5           blood to maintain visualization in a tight otologic surgical site using only said knife  
6           in one hand of the surgeon, said knife comprising:  
7           a)       a slender, hollow, elongated shaft defining a longitudinal canal  
8                   therethrough, said shaft having a proximal end suitable for being held by a  
9                   hand of a surgeon and a distal end, an effluent opening remote from said  
10                  distal end of said shaft for exit of fluid via said canal in said shaft to the  
11                  suction source, said shaft further defining at said distal end thereof an  
12                  influent opening for receiving blood to said canal in said shaft;  
13           b)       an annular blade having a diameter and also mounted at said distal end of  
14                  said shaft with said distal end of said shaft and said influent opening in said

15                   shaft extending into said annular blade approximately one third to one half  
16                   said diameter of said blade;  
17           whereby blood is withdrawn from said blade into said influent opening in said shaft  
18           for evacuation to the suction source via said canal in said shaft so as to allow  
19           visualization of a cutting area of said blade to be maintained and blood to be  
20           withdrawn from a tight surgical site;  
21           and whereby the surgeon is able to operate said surgical knife with one hand so as  
22           to allow the other hand to be free for other use.